(ii) To provide all necessary documents, research work relating to WTO negotiations.

(iii) To act as a storehouse and documentation centre for information/ data pertaining to WTO related issues.

(iv) To conduct short term courses, orientation courses and awareness programmes for familiarising members of the business community with WTO related issues.

(v) To bring out publications and handbooks for use of trade and industry.

(vi) Any other task assigned by the Govt. relating to WTO matters.

(c) The Centre is expected to become operational during the year 1998-99.

Shortfall in Growth Rate of Export

1235.SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:
SHRI RAJUBHAI A. PARMAR:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether exports during the first ten months of 1997-98 have registered a negative growth of over 2 per cent over that during the corresponding period in 1996-97;

(b) if so, the main reasons for the shortfall;

(c) whether Government have probed into the matter and what steps were taken to remove and eliminate factors responsible for decline in exports;

(d) if so, the details in this regard; and

(e) the resultant improvement in export performance during the following period?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) Exports have not registered a negative growth in the first ten months of 1997-98. As per the provisional data received from the Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence & Statistics (DGCI & S), the exports have registered an increase of 2.4 per cent in Dollar terms and 6.3 per cent in Rupee terms during the first ten months of 1997-98 over the corresponding period last year.

(b) to (d) Does not arise.

(e) As per the provisional data received from the Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence & Statistics (DGCI&S), the exports have registered an increase of 2.64 per cent in Dollar terms and 7.5 per cent in Rupee terms during 1997-98 over the corresponding period last year.

Piling of Toxic Wastes

1236.SHRI GHUFRAN AZAM:
SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government's attention have been drawn to the press news-item captioned "toxic wastes piling up in India" as reported in the Statement dated 28th April, 1998;

(b) if so, whether containers full of toxic substances and exported to India by other countries are lying unclaimed at several ports; and

(c) if so, the facts thereof and remedial steps Governments propose to take in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. As per the information received from the Ministry of Environment and Forests, the status of hazardous wastes lying at some of the ports and container depots is given in the Annexure. [*See* Appendix **184**, Annexure No. 41]

Existing facilities at various industrial units for disposal of these wastes in an environmentally sound manner have been surveyed by the Ministry of environment and Forests. Samples of hazardous wastes lying at various ports and container depots have been collected and their analysis is in progress.